

Hercules Bayfront Project Draft Environmental Impact Report

February 23, 2011



Meeting Purpose

- Hold public hearing on Hercules Bayfront Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
 - Applicant: Hercules Bayfront, LLC
 - Lead Agency: City of Hercules
 - Consultants: Wagstaff/MIG
- Consider public comment
- Provide consultant team with comments and/or questions to be addressed in the Final EIR
- No decision on the EIR or project will be taken tonight

Meeting Outline

- Environmental Impact Report Presentation
 - Purpose
 - California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Process
- Next Steps
- Planning Commission questions and comments
- Public Comment

CEQA Overview

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- CEQA Guidelines for EIR Preparation
 - Specify:*
 - How to determine scope of the EIR
 - Required EIR process (Draft EIR and Final EIR)
 - Required EIR content
 - How to provide for public participation
 - How to implement EIR recommendations

Purpose of Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

- Inform decision-makers and the public
 - Describe the Project
 - Describe the affected environment
 - Evaluate environmental effects
 - Identify mitigation to avoid or reduce "significant" environmental effects
 - Consider Alternatives to the Project that avoid or reduce significant environmental impacts

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Process

- Establish the scope for the EIR
 - Notice of Preparation (NOP)—November 16, 2009
 - Public Scoping Meeting—December 15, 2009
- Prepare the Draft EIR—released January 19, 2011
- Provide for a 45-day public and agency review of the Draft EIR (January 20 to March 7)
- Prepare the Final EIR
 - Respond to all comments submitted on the Draft EIR, including those received tonight
- Certify the Final EIR

Hercules Bayfront Project EIR

- Draft EIR content:
 - Project Description
 - Project objectives
 - Project physical characteristics
 - "Shared facilities" with Intermodal Transit Center (ITC) EIR/EIS
 - Anticipated project phasing
 - Required jurisdictional approvals
 - Impacts and Mitigations
 - Significance Criteria (State and City)
 - Significant Impacts
 - Mitigation Measures
 - Significant Unavoidable Impacts
 - Alternatives to the Proposed Project
 - Alternatives to project that would avoid or reduce significant impacts

Hercules Bayfront Project EIR

- Environmental topics addressed:
 - Aesthetics
 - Air Quality
 - Biological Resources
 - Climate Change
 - Cultural and Historic Resources
 - Geology and Soils
 - Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Hercules Bayfront Project EIR

- Environmental topics addressed (continued):
 - Hydrology and Water Quality
 - Land Use and Planning
 - Noise
 - Population and Housing
 - Public Services and Utilities (police, fire, parks, schools, water, wastewater, solid waste/recycling)
 - Transportation and Circulation

Hercules Bayfront Project EIR

- Draft EIR identifies a number of "significant impacts"
- Draft EIR identifies mitigations sufficient to reduce many of these impacts to "less-than-significant" levels
- Draft EIR identifies some impacts where mitigation to "less-than-significant" levels cannot be assured under the proposed project--i.e., "significant unavoidable impacts"

Aesthetics (Draft EIR chapter 4)

- Aesthetics (Visual) Impact Findings:
 - The proposed project would preserve and provide public access to selected scenic vistas of Hercules Point and San Pablo Bay
 - Other views, including views of the Bay and Refugio Creek, could be obscured by project structures and landscaping
 - The project's prominent location on the waterfront is directly visible from higher surrounding community vantage points (e.g., I-80)

Aesthetics (Draft EIR Chapter 4)

■ Aesthetics (Visual) Mitigation Findings:

- Project site plan could be revised to reduce impacts on scenic vistas to less-than-significant levels, but City may decide that the benefits of a substantial project redesign may not outweigh the economic and other benefits of retaining the proposed layout (i.e., a significant unavoidable impact)
- Permanent change in existing visual character of the waterfront site would be considered a significant unavoidable impact

Biological Resources (Draft EIR Chapter 6)

- Biological Resources Impact Findings:
 - Proposed project and/or shared facilities construction could result in disturbance of special-status nesting birds and/or bird nests, primarily along Refugio Creek and the North Channel
 - There is also a remote chance that the following other special-status species could inhabit the project and/or shared facilities sites:
 - Salt marsh wandering shrew, San Pablo vole, vernal pool fairy shrimp, steelhead, western pond turtle, California red-legged frog, and bats
 - Shared facilities construction could result in the loss of sensitive marsh habitat and jurisdictional wetlands (e.g., Refugio Creek, North Channel)
 - Shared facilities construction could result in spread of invasive species

Biological Resources (Draft EIR Chapter 6)

- Biological Resources Mitigation Findings:
 - All potentially significant impacts on biological resources could be reduced to less-than-significant levels with mitigation measures in Draft EIR, including mitigation protocols of the California Dept. of Fish & Game (CDFG), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), NOAA Fisheries, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Historic Resources (Draft EIR Chapter 8)

- Historic Resources Impact Findings:
 - The proposed Project may result in significant changes to the former Administration Building and former Clubhouse of the Hercules Powder Company
 - The Project proposes renovation and adaptive reuse of the two historic buildings, but detailed designs have not yet been prepared

Historic Resources (Draft EIR Chapter 8)

- Historic Resources Mitigation Findings:
 - Draft EIR mitigation would require the Administration Building and the Clubhouse to be preserved and rehabilitated according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and to the satisfaction of the City of Hercules Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB)
 - Impact on historic resources after this mitigation would be less-than-significant

Transportation and Circulation (Draft EIR Chapter 16)

- Transportation and Circulation Impact Findings:
 - The proposed Project would result in a significant impact at the I-80 westbound John Muir Parkway off-ramp during the AM peak hour
 - The addition of project traffic to cumulative (2035) conditions would add significant delays (up to 2 minutes) at intersections along San Pablo Ave. (at JMP, Old Transit Center Driveway, Sycamore), Willow (at Sycamore), and Sycamore (at Tsushima)
 - The addition of project traffic to 2035 conditions would also have significant impacts on I-80 freeway segments and ramps, but not to any SR 4 facilities
 - The proposed "shared facility" bicycle circulation system could result in a bicycle lane gap on John Muir Parkway

Transportation and Circulation (Draft EIR Chapter 16)

- Transportation and Circulation Mitigation Findings:
 - Existing Plus Project impact at I-80 JMP off-ramp would be significant and unavoidable due to mitigation infeasibility (physical, cost, and jurisdictional constraints) of widening I-80 mainline
 - Project contributions to cumulative freeway impacts would be significant and unavoidable due to infeasibility (physical, cost, jurisdictional, and environmental constraints) of widening I-80, reconstructing bridge structures, and constructing new retaining walls
 - Potential regional I-80 improvements (e.g., ramp metering, HOV lanes) would reduce cumulative impacts, but not to less-than-significant levels
 - With mitigation identified in Draft EIR, project contributions to cumulative intersection impacts would be less-than-significant, except for San Pablo/Sycamore PM peak hour (significant and unavoidable)
 - Bicycle lane gap would be mitigated by (1) a flashing crosswalk or (2) Creekside Trail extension in place of sidewalk on JMP

Alternatives to the Proposed Action (Draft EIR Chapter 19)

- CEQA-required Alternatives analysis
- 5 alternatives evaluated:
 - 1. No Project--Existing Conditions
 - 2. No Project--Waterfront District Master Plan (WDMP) Scenario Without Project-Proposed Amendments
 - 3. Reduced Development Scenario
 - 4. Reduced Biological Resources Impact Layout
 - 5. Alternative Project Location

Draft EIR Public Comment

- 45 day public review period – January 20 to March 7
- Public Meetings – February 23 Planning Commission
- Public hearing notices, press releases, email list; notification of property owners and interested parties

Next Steps

- EIR consultants complete “Responses to Comments” and prepare Final EIR
- Planning Commission to consider recommendation to City Council to certify Final EIR for the Hercules Bayfront Project
- City Council considers certification of Final EIR and approval of Hercules Bayfront Project

Project Contacts

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Planning Commission

- Clarifying questions/comments
- Take public comment